

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARLAY:TH

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

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S/S - JHOGANSON

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TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 087615

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

1. WE HAVE REPEATED TO YOU DICK MURPHY'S ANALYSIS OF THE SYRIAN STATE OF MIND ON THE LEBANESE PROBLEM (DAMASCUS 2118). WE ARE ALSO SENDING YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION A TELEGRAM FOR MURPHY'S ACTION THAT ADDS A FEW INSIGHTS WE HAVE HAD FROM THE JORDANIANS ABOUT SYRIAN REACTION TO YOUR EFFORTS.

2. WE HAVE STILL HAD NO RESPONSE FROM THE SYRIANS CONCERNING YOUR ACTIVITY AS IT RELATES TO THEIR PLANS AND INTENTIONS. THEY ARE MEANWHILE PROCEEDING WITH ACTIVE AND FORCEFUL EFFORTS TO MANIPULATE THE LEBANESE SITUATION, EMPLOYING POLITICAL MANEUVERING BACKED BY SUBSTANTIAL SHOW OF FORCE. THEY HAVE GIVEN US NO INSIGHT INTO THEIR TACTICAL SCHEME, THOUGH WE HAVE A BETTER FEEL FOR THE OUTCOME THEY ARE WORKING TOWARD.

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3. WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING HOW YOU SHOULD DIRECT YOUR EFFORTS IN THE COMING DAYS; PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE CONTINUING SILENCE FROM DAMASCUS. THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS HAS NOW BEGUN; THE SYRIANS WITH THEIR SHOW OF FORCE HAVE GIVEN FURTHER INDICATION OF THEIR DETERMINATION TO KEEP THE LID ON WHILE THE PROCESS UNFOLDS; LEBANESE POLITICING WILL INTENSIFY AS THE ELECTION APPROACHES; AND THE LARGER QUESTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER REFORMS WILL COME MORE TO THE FRONT AS THE PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS ARE ACCOMPLISHED. WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE CARRIED THE MATTER OF SHORT AND LONGER TERM SECURITY FORCES ABOUT AS FAR AS YOU CAN FOR THE MOMENT. WHILE WE DO NOT SEE OURSELVES AS TIED TO SYRIAN POLICY EXCLUSIVELY IN LEBANON, IT IS A FACT OF LIFE THAT NO SECURITY FORCE IS GOING TO GET OFF THE GROUND UNLESS THEY ARE PREPARED TO PUSH IT. WE ALSO QUESTION WHETHER YOU SHOULD ALLOW YOURSELF TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE JUMBLATT-SYRIAN RELATIONSHIP, WHICH DOUBTLESS HAS MANY LAYERS AND ANGLES WE CANNOT BE AWARE OF.

4. THIS LEAVES AS AREAS OF MOST FRUITFUL ENDEAVOR THE WHOLE MATTER OF RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE LEBANESE FACTIONS AND THE COMPLEX AND LONG TERM PROBLEM OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. THE TWO ARE OBVIOUSLY RELATED. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR A CONCILIATION ROLE IN THESE AREAS THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO CARRY ON IN RELATIVE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SYRIANS OR ANY OTHER OUTSIDE ELEMENTS. WE HAVE A LONG TRADITION OF INTEREST AND ACTIVITY IN LEBANON AND WE HAVE OUR OWN IDEAS OF WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE LEBANON BECOME. THESE IDEAS MAY WELL NOT BE ENTIRELY PARALLEL WITH SYRIAN CONCEPTS, THOUGH THEY SEEM TO BE ALONG SIMILAR LINES, AND WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO WORK IN OUR OWN DIRECTION.

5. I WOULD LIKE WITHIN THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS TO HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPING SITUATION AND YOUR THOUGHTS ON YOUR OWN ROLE THERE. MEANWHILE, I WANT TO TELL YOU HOW WE HAVE ADMIRERED THE ENERGY AND
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SKILL YOU HAVE SHOWN IN YOUR FIRST WEEK ON THE JOB. I THINK I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY AND I CAN RECOGNIZE A FIRST-CLASS JOB OF IT WHEN I SEE IT. SURELY THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH YOU ARE OPERATING COULD HARDLY BE MORE DIFFICULT OR THE GAME MORE COMPLEX. KISSINGER

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